UNIT 10: Providing Assistance

Health care workers provide many services for their patients. Many times they have to help with something physical. They might have to move or help clean patients or give them instructions. It is necessary to kindly offer this help with verbal intentions followed by clear instructions and check for understanding. If all these communication skills are used, the patient will experience smooth and comfortable care.

Giving Instructions

It is very important to make instructions as simple as possible so they can be understood. Some patients may be in pain, distracted, or may not hear well. There are some basic principles for effective communication with patients. Health care workers need to remember these when helping the patient do something or when conducting any procedure.

- explain the procedure
- check for understanding
- seek cooperation
- encourage the patient
- reassure the patient
- give feedback

Listening to the Action

LISTENING FOR LANGUAGE

Listen to the conversations between health care workers and patients. What phrases do the health care workers use to explain steps in a procedure in Conversation 1, check for understanding in Conversation 2, and reassure in Conversation 3?

1. 

2. 

3. 

Dialogue

PRACTICING THE LANGUAGE

A patient with a hip injury needs to be turned in bed. A nurse is giving instructions. Practice the dialogue with a partner.

*Nurse:* Hello, Mr. Folse. How is your hip doing? That was quite an injury you sustained: a broken hip and a dislocated knee.

*Patient:* Yes. I am lucky to be alive. I still feel some swelling here.

*Nurse:* Well, it's time to roll you over. We don't want you to get bed sores from lying in one position.

*Patient:* Is it going to hurt? Last time I felt a sharp pain.

*Nurse:* Don't worry. We will take it easy and do it together, step by step. First, I'll have you cross your arms across your chest. Good. Next, I'll gently move your upper body toward me. Then, I'll do the middle part and lower part. Are you following me?

*Patient:* Yes, I am. Are you then going to flip me?

*Nurse:* Not yet. I need to get some assistance for that.

*Patient:* Oh, boy. I'm really nervous.

*Nurse:* Everything will be fine. Here comes Juanita. We will be very gentle. Here we go, Mr. Folse. Please take a deep breath and relax.

Vocabulary

Common Injuries and Related Words

Even though there are hundreds of different injuries, knowing the most common ones will be useful in your career.

- **Common Injuries:** bed sore, bruise, broken (bone), bump, burn, cut/laceration, dislocated elbow, gash, graze, lesion, sprain, tear, wound/puncture wound
- **Related Words:** boil, cyst, growth, lump, mass, infection, rash, scab, spot, swollen (leg), inflamed (ankle)
SENTENCE COMPLETION

Complete the sentences with an injury or related word from page 173.

1. A ____________ is an injury that causes a break or opening in the skin.

2. A ____________ shoulder is when a bone is pushed or pulled out of position.

3. When a ligament is stretched too far or tears, the joint will become painful and swollen. The diagnosis is a _____________.

4. A ____________ is blood collected underneath the skin and is caused by trauma to an area of the body.

5. A ____________ is the result of inflammation and damage caused by irritation to the skin and slowed blood flow. It happens when someone is in the same position in bed for a long time.

CATEGORIZING

Name three body parts for each category.

1. Body parts that can break
   ___________________________ ___________________________ ___________________________

2. Body parts that can swell
   ___________________________ ___________________________

3. Body parts that can be bruised
   ___________________________ ___________________________

4. Body parts that can dislocated
   ___________________________
Communication Strategy

CHECKING FOR UNDERSTANDING

When you need to know that someone understands you, use extra phrases. There are many phrases to use to determine if a patient, another health care worker, or a doctor can understand you. You must be careful to use the appropriate form (formal or informal) when checking comprehension.

**Formal**

Pardon me. Can you understand what I said?
Excuse me. Am I making myself clear?
I'm sorry. Am I making sense?
Sorry. Are you following me?

**Informal**

Am I making sense?
Are you following me?
Can you understand me?
Is that clear?

**DIALOGUE PRACTICE**

Read and practice the dialogue with a partner.

1. **Nurse:** I need you to roll over to the side, please.
   **Patient:** Hmm.
   **Nurse:** Sorry. Are you following me?
   **Patient:** Oh, yeah. Something . . . the side?
   **Nurse:** Right. I need you to roll over to the side.

2. **Supervising Nurse:** You need to give Mr. Vortis his antibiotic through the I.V.
   **Nurse:** Give antibiotics, right?
   **Supervising Nurse:** Am I making myself clear?
   **Nurse:** Oh, sure. Antibiotics through his I.V.
DIALOGUE COMPLETION

Complete the dialogues with phrases from the box on page 175. Then read and practice the dialogues with a partner.

1. Nurse: When should I attend to the transfusion patient in 210-B?
   Head Nurse: Yes.
   Nurse: ____________________________.
   Head Nurse: Oh. Can you repeat that, then?
   Nurse: When should I attend to the transfusion patient in Room 210-B?
   Head Nurse: Oh, right away, please.

2. Nurse 1: Can I get an update on Ms. Belcher's blood pressure?
   Nurse 2: Huh?
   Nurse 1: ____________________________?
   Nurse 2: I think so. Ms. Belcher in 1209-A, right?
   Nurse 1: Yes, that's right.
   Nurse 2: OK, I'll do it now.

3. Nurse: Please sit up for your sponge bath, O.K.?
   Sleepy Patient: Sponge bad?
   Nurse: ____________________________?
   Sleepy Patient: No, not really.
   Nurse: We need you to sit up for your sponge bath now. Is that O.K. with you?

Communication Strategy

GIVING INSTRUCTIONS

Many times instructions are given step by step. They have a clear beginning, middle, and end and each step must be done in sequence. When you are giving good instructions, you need to make each step clear. Use a word from each column to tell what happens step by step.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beginning</th>
<th>Middle</th>
<th>End</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First</td>
<td>Second</td>
<td>Finally</td>
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<tr>
<td>At the beginning</td>
<td>After</td>
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<td>At first</td>
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<td>The final step</td>
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<td>Step 1</td>
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<td>Step 2, 3, 4</td>
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</table>
**DIALOGUE PRACTICE**

Read and practice the dialogue with a partner.

*Nurse:* Hello, Shinji. We need to change the dressing on your wound.

*Patient:* Can you tell me what you will do?

*Nurse:* Sure. First, I’ll place the supplies on a sterile metal tray. Second, I’ll open the packages and lay the bandages out. Then, I’ll wash my hands and put on a pair of latex gloves. Next, I’ll gently peel back and remove the old dressing and throw it away using tweezers. Then, I’ll check your wound to see if it is healing well. Next, I’ll apply a sterile nonstick gauze pad and more dressing with tape. Finally, I’ll throw away used material and wash my hands again.

*Patient:* Thanks for explaining it to me.

**EXPLAINING A PROCEDURE**

Choose two situations, and write step-by-step directions with a partner. Add more lines if necessary.

answer a call light  change shifts  strip discharge beds
put on PPE  collect a urine sample  transfer a resident

How to: __________________________________________

A: Excuse me. I want to __________________________________________

What do I have to do?

B: Well, first, __________________________________________

A: OK. Then what?

B: Then, __________________________________________

A: I see. What’s next?

B: Next, __________________________________________

A: I ______________? Is that all?

B: Well, finally you have to __________________________________________
Pronunciation: Contrastive Stress

Contrastive stress is stressing one word more than another. Listen to your instructor read the examples. Which words get more stress? Why?

Nurse 1: His parents were excited to see him get up out of bed.

Nurse 2: Yes, but they were really excited to see him walk 50 steps!

Nurse 1: It’s Sunday, so maybe the ED won’t be busy this evening.

Nurse 2: It’s Super Bowl Sunday, so the ED will definitely be busy this evening!

In the first example, both speakers use the word excited, but Nurse 2 says really excited. Really is new information, so it gets more stress. Nurse 1 says, “Get up out of bed,” and then Nurse 2 says, “Walk 50 steps.” Walk 50 steps is different information, so it gets more stress.

In the second example, Nurse 2 is correcting Nurse 1. It is not a regular Sunday; it’s Super Bowl Sunday, and the prediction is that it will be busy.

Rule: Use contrastive stress when the word gives new information, different information, or corrected information.

RECOGNIZING CONTRASTIVE STRESS

Read the dialogues. Mark the word or words in the responses that should be stressed more than the others.

1. Nurse 1: I’ve worked for Mission Hospital for three years.
   Nurse 2: Really? I’ve worked for Mission Hospital for five years.

2. Nurse 1: The floor is really quiet today.
   Nurse 2: I bet the whole ward is really quiet too.

3. Nurse 1: Are you upset?
   Nurse 2: No, I’m tired.

4. Nurse 1: Tomorrow my shift starts at 7:00 AM.
   Nurse 2: No, tomorrow your shift starts at 6:00 AM.
MAKING CORRECTIONS

Read the sentences, and then correct the mistakes. Mark the words that should receive more stress. Practice them with a partner. The first one has been done for you as an example.

1. Young patients are in the geriatrics center.
   •
   No, they're in the pediatrics center.

2. The president of the medical staff is the highest position in this hospital.

3. First degree burns are worse than second degree burns.

4. Do I fold the washcloth first and then wipe?

5. A bruise can often turn pink.

ADDING NEW INFORMATION

Answer the questions, and add new requests. Practice them with a partner. The first one has been done for you as an example.

*  
1. Do you need some bandages? Yes, but I need clips too.

2. Would you like me to get more towels?

3. Can I get you some cotton balls?

4. Will you need some antiseptic?

5. Would you like more light?

6. Are you going to need more gauze?
Review

DIALOGUE REVIEW

Review the dialogue on page 173. As you read, follow the directions. Then compare your answers with a partner.

- Underline the Injury terms.
- Circle the Giving Instruction phrases.
- Box the Checking for Understanding phrase.

ROLE PLAYS: GIVING INSTRUCTIONS

Work with a partner. Read each situation, and develop a dialogue to perform for the class.

A nurse is teaching the following procedures to a patient. The patient is giving verbal cues. The nurse can check for understanding.

1. emptying and changing a urinary drainage bag
2. bathing (partial or complete bed bath, tub bath, shower, or perineal care)
3. Putting on an N-95 face mask
4. using a self-operated pain drip
5. changing a dressing on a wound
6. getting out of bed
7. ambulating (cane, walker, or gait belt)